



J. TYLER McCaULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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June 9, 2006

TO: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: HOMES OF HOPE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY CONTRACT REVIEW

We have completed a contract compliance review of Homes of Hope Foster Family Agency (Homes of Hope or Agency), a Foster Family Agency service provider. The review was conducted by the Auditor-Controller's Countywide Contract Monitoring Division.

Background

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) contracts with Homes of Hope, a private, non-profit, community-based organization to recruit, train, and certify foster care parents for the supervision of children placed in foster care by DCFS. Once the Agency places a child, it is required to monitor the placement until the child is discharged from the program.

Homes of Hope is required to hire qualified social workers to provide case management and act as a liaison between DCFS and foster parents. Homes of Hope is located in the Fifth District and oversees a total of 60 certified foster homes in which 129 DCFS children were placed.

DCFS pays Homes of Hope a negotiated monthly rate, per child placement, established by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Funding and Rate Bureau. Based on the child's age, Homes of Hope receives between \$1,589 and \$1,865 per month, per child. Out of these funds, the Agency pays the foster parents between \$624 and \$790 per month, per child. For Fiscal Year 2004-05, DCFS paid Homes of Hope approximately \$2,650,000.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Purpose/Methodology

The purpose of the review was to determine whether Homes of Hope was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement and County contract. We also evaluated Homes of Hope's ability to achieve planned staffing levels. Our monitoring visit included verifying whether the Agency received the appropriate reimbursement rate for each child and whether the certified foster parents received their portion of the reimbursement rate in a timely manner. We reviewed certified foster parent files, children's case files, personnel files, and interviewed Homes of Hope staff, the children and the foster parents. We also visited a number of certified foster homes.

Results of Review

Generally, Homes of Hope provided the services required by the County contract. The foster parents stated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations, and the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents. In addition, Homes of Hope maintained the appropriate staffing levels and their social worker caseloads did not exceed the maximum allowed by CDSS Title 22.

Homes of Hope needs to ensure that psychological evaluations are documented for children on psychotropic medication and current court authorizations are maintained as required by the County contract. The Agency did not document all of the children's monthly evaluations from the prescribing physician for 20 children on psychotropic medications as required by the County contract. Homes of Hope indicated that the children were seen as required by the Agency's mental health facility. However, not all of the visits were documented. In addition, the Agency did not maintain current court authorizations for the administration of their medication for three of the 20 children. The authorizations in the children's files expired an average of six months prior to our review. Subsequent to the conclusion of the review, the Agency provided a faxed request from the prescribing physician to obtain current authorizations from the court.

We also noted that the children's Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports prepared by the Agency did not contain all the information required by the County contract.

The details of our review, along with recommendation for corrective action, are attached.

Review of Report

On May 23, 2006, we discussed our report with Homes of Hope who generally agreed with the findings. In their attached response, Homes of Hope management indicates the actions the Agency has taken to implement the recommendations. We also notified DCFS of the results of our review.

Board of Supervisors

June 9, 2006

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We thank Homes of Hope for their cooperation and assistance during this review. Please call me if you have any questions, or your staff may contact Don Chadwick at (626) 293-1102.

JTM:MMO:DC

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, Department of Children and Family Services
Ms. Suki Singh, Director, Homes of Hope Foster Family Agency
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**COUNTYWIDE CONTRACT MONITORING DIVISION
FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY PROGRAM
FISCAL YEAR 2005-2006
HOMES OF HOPE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY**

PROGRAM SERVICES

Objective

Determine whether Homes of Hope Foster Family Agency (Homes of Hope or Agency) provided program services in accordance with their County contract and California Department of Social Services (CDSS) Title 22 Regulations.

Verification

We visited seven of the 60 Los Angeles County certified foster homes that Homes of Hope billed the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) in October and November 2005 and interviewed the seven foster parents and nine of the 22 children placed in the seven homes. We also reviewed the case files for the seven foster parents and 16 of the 22 children. In addition, we reviewed the Agency's monitoring activity.

Results

The foster parents stated that the services they received from the Agency met their expectations, and the children indicated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents.

Homes of Hope needs to improve their oversight of their foster homes to ensure the homes are safe and comply with the provisions of Title 22 and the County contract. Homes of Hope also needs to ensure that current court authorizations are maintained and that psychological evaluations are documented for children on psychotropic medication as required by the County contract. In addition, Homes of Hope needs to ensure children's Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all the information required by the County contract.

Foster Home Visitations

- Two (28%) of seven homes visited did not have operable smoke detectors in the main hallway to the children's bedrooms as required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. One of the homes did not have a smoke detector in the hallway to the children's bedroom while the other home's smoke detector in the hallway to the children's bedroom needed batteries.
- One foster parent did not restrict the children's access to the spa when it was not in use. The spa's cover was not locked at the time of our visit allowing a child to enter

the spa. Title 22 regulations require Agencies to ensure that swimming pools and similar bodies of water are inaccessible to children when not in use.

- One foster parent did not maintain a weekly allowance log for the four children in one home visited. The log should contain the date, the amount of allowance and the children's signatures upon receipt of the allowance. The County contract requires the Agency to monitor for compliance that foster parents complete allowance logs. The foster parent indicated that she completes the logs for the children at the end of each month. However, Homes of Hope's program statement requires foster parents to provide children an allowance weekly.
- One foster parent did not log daily medication taken. The County contract requires Homes of Hope to ensure that foster parents record the type, date and time of all prescription and non-prescription medication administered by foster parents to children.

Foster Parent Certification

- Homes of Hope did not have proof of current automobile insurance for the foster parent's designated driver for one (14%) of seven foster homes as required by the County contract. During the review, the Agency provided proof of current insurance for the designated driver.

Medical Services

- Two (12%) of the 16 children did not receive their initial medical or dental examination within the timeframes specified in the County contract. The County contract and Title 22 regulations require the Agency to ensure that children receive their routine annual medical and dental exams within thirty days of placement. One child's initial medical exam was 41 days late. The second child's initial dental exam was 32 days late. Homes of Hope management stated that the Agency had difficulty in obtaining Medi-Cal cards for the children and that the exams were scheduled as soon as the cards were obtained.
- The Agency did not have current court authorizations for the administration of medication in children's case files for three (15%) of the 20 children on psychotropic medications. The authorizations in the children's files expired an average of six months prior to our review. Subsequent to the issuance of this report, Homes of Hope provided documentation that current court authorizations had been obtained for the children.
- The Agency did not incorporate the medication into the child's overall treatment plan for five (25%) of 20 children on psychotropic medications as required by the County contract.

- The Agency did not consistently document that the children were receiving monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician for all 20 (100%) children on psychotropic medications as required by the County contract. Homes of Hope indicated that the children were seen monthly as required by the Agency's mental health facility. However, not all of the visits were documented.

Needs and Services Plans

- Six (38%) of the 16 Needs and Services Plans reviewed did not contain all the information required by the County contract. The six plans did not include information on the child's ability to manage his/her own money as required by the County contract. In addition, five of the six plans also did not contain information on the child's personal care and grooming as required by the County contract. Subsequent to the audit, the Agency modified their Needs and Services Plans to include personal care and grooming and information on the child's ability to manage his/her money

Reporting Requirements

- Two (50%) of four quarterly reports, for children 14 years or older, did not contain a copy of the children's Emancipation Preparation Contract as required by the County contract.

Recommendations

Homes of Hope management:

1. **Ensure that staff adequately monitor foster homes to ensure the homes comply with the County contract and Title 22 Regulations.**
2. **Ensure that foster homes have operable smoke detectors in the hallways to the children's bedrooms as required by the County contract.**
3. **Ensure that swimming pools and similar bodies of water are inaccessible to children when not in use.**
4. **Ensure that foster parents maintain weekly allowance logs and daily medication logs as required by the County contract.**
5. **Ensure that foster parents or their designated drivers possess valid automobile insurance.**
6. **Ensure children receive their initial medical and dental examinations within the timeframes specified in the County contract.**

7. Ensure that children using psychotropic medications have current court authorizations and that the medication is incorporated into the children's overall treatment plan as required by the County contract.
8. Ensure that documentation is maintained to support that children using psychotropic medications receive monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician as required by the County contract.
9. Ensure that Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all information required by the County contract.

CLIENT VERIFICATION

Objective

Determine whether the program participants received the services that Homes of Hope billed DCFS.

Verification

We interviewed nine children placed in seven Homes of Hope certified foster homes and seven foster parents to confirm the services Homes of Hope billed to DCFS.

Results

The foster parents interviewed stated that the services they received from Homes of Hope generally met their expectations and their assigned social workers visited them regularly. The children interviewed also stated that they enjoyed living with their foster parents.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING/CASELOAD LEVELS

Objective

Determine whether Homes of Hope social workers' case loads do not exceed 15 placements and whether the supervising social worker does not supervise more than six social workers, as required by the County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations.

Verification

We interviewed the director, office manager, and a supervising social worker and reviewed case load statistics and payroll records for September and October 2005.

Results

The 11 social workers maintained an average caseload of 12 cases and the supervising social workers supervised an average of six social workers during the months of September and October 2005.

Recommendation

There are no recommendations for this section.

STAFFING QUALIFICATIONS**Objective**

Determine whether Homes of Hope's staff possess the education and work experience qualifications required by their County contract and CDSS Title 22 regulations. In addition, determine whether Homes of Hope conducted hiring clearances for staff assigned to the County contract.

Verification

We interviewed Homes of Hope's executive director, office manager and supervising social worker. In addition, we reviewed each staff's personnel file for documentation to confirm their education and work experience qualifications, hiring clearances, ongoing training and performance evaluations.

Results

Homes of Hope's executive director, supervising social workers and social workers possessed the education and work experience required by the County contract and Title 22 regulations. In addition, the Agency completed hiring clearances for staff assigned to the County contract.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.



Homes of Hope Foster Family Agency

1-888-94-4-HOPE

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Phone: (626) 814-9085
Fax: (626) 814-2276
Facility License 197803171

June 5, 2006

Mental Health Clinic
1107 S. Glendora Avenue
West Covina, CA 91790
Phone: (626) 814-9085
Fax: (626) 960-9125

*Casa Esperanza
Treatment Center*
1568 McLeod
Pomona, CA 91768
Phone: (909) 620-7543
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Facility License 197804217

*Members of:
West Covina Chamber
of Commerce*

*California Association
of Children's Homes*

*Child Welfare League
Of America, Inc.*



www.homesofhope.us

Brian Hendricks, Auditor Controller
Los Angeles County Auditor Controller's Office
Audit Division
1000 S. Fremont Avenue
Unit 51, Bldg. A-9 East
Alhambra, CA 91803

RE: Homes of Hope Foster Family Agency
FFA Audit – Fiscal Year 2005 – 2006
Corrective Action Plans

Dear Mr. Hendricks:

Enclosed is our contract compliance corrective action plans for the audit findings, Exit Conference 1/26/06.

We will continue to assist your department in order to complete this audit's response. If you have any questions or wish to make further recommendations, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sukhwinder Singh".

Sukhwinder Singh
Executive Director

HOMES OF HOPE FOSTER FAMILY AGENCY
FFA Audit Findings and Corrective Action Plan
Fiscal Year 2005 - 2006

Date: June 6, 2006

Date of Exit: 1/26/06

Recommendations	Corrective Action
1. Ensure that staff adequately monitors foster homes to ensure the homes comply with the County contract and Title 22 Regulations.	FFASW will conduct weekly visits to the home, provide documentation, i.e., weekly visit notes, quarterly reports, needs and service plans, quarterly home checks and prepare a plan of correction if necessary. HOH Social Worker Supervisors to review all cases with FFASW at weekly supervision.
2. Ensure that foster homes have operable smoke detectors in the hallways to the children's bedrooms as required by the County contract.	FFASW will conduct a facility check to include smoke detectors are operable during the quarterly Home Compliance Check and prepare a plan of correction if necessary. Smoke detectors in hallways will be added to the Home Compliance Checklist.
3. Ensure that swimming pools and similar bodies of water are inaccessible to children when not in use.	FFASW will check spas and similar bodies of water for compliance during quarterly Home Compliance Check and randomly during weekly home visits.
4. Ensure that foster parents maintain weekly allowance logs and daily medication logs as required by the County contract.	FFASW will review Weekly Allowance logs for placed children each week for compliance and will collect the logs at the end of each month. Originals will be brought to the agency and placed in the child's file. Daily medication logs will be reviewed at each weekly visit by the FFASW for children who are on medication.
5. Ensure that foster parents or their designated drivers possess valid automobile insurance.	The agency Quality Assurance Department will utilize foster track and internal tracking logs to ensure that foster parents are notified in advance of the expiration of their automobile insurance in order to obtain timely renewals.
6. Ensure children receive their initial medical and dental examinations within the time frames specified in the County contract.	At each new placement, Intake will remind each foster parent regarding children medical and dental examinations requirements, infants and at risk children within 3 days and over age 3 within 30 days. Social Workers will be alerted by Quality Assurance Dept. regarding foster track and in-house tracking systems that show pending exams prior to the deadline for follow-up with the foster parents.
7. Ensure that children using psychotropic medications have current court authorizations and that the medication is incorporated into the children's overall treatment plan as required by the County contract.	Prior to accepting new placements who are on psychotropics, children must have a current authorization. Regarding currently placed children, documentation will be kept in the child's file of all contacts made to the County Worker regarding copies of the court authorization to be sent to HOH. The HOH Needs and Service Plan has been revised to include whether a child is on psychotropic medication, including a section specifically referring to Mental Health and Psychiatric Medications incorporated into the treatment plan.
8. Ensure that documentation is maintained to support that children using psychotropic medications receive monthly evaluations by the prescribing physician as required by the County contract.	DCFS form 561 will be completed by the mental health provider for all placed children who are receiving treatment by a therapist and psychiatrist that will confirm that a monthly evaluation was conducted.
9. Ensure that Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports contain all information required by the County contract.	The Needs and Services Treatment Plans for Homes of Hope has been modified to include sections that would require social workers to respond to the child's grooming, personal care and ability to manage their own cash resources.